KPOV – The Point

Gardening: Get Good at It

“What Worked, What Didn’t, What to Do Next Year”

September 18, 2018

As the last days of Indian Summer wind down, we gardeners may be finishing cleaning up flower and veggie beds, composting and planning for next year.  What a wonderful time to evaluate the failures and successes of our gardens and examine what did well, what needs some thought and changes and how we will make those changes in 2019.  Here are some questions you may want to ask yourself and some thoughts to consider for the coming year.

If you keep a garden journal, noting what was planted and where will be an easy task.  If not, now is the time to take a pad and pen or pencil and walk around your flower and vegetable garden beds.  Make note of the location of plantings in the vegetable garden, be sure to put down how many consecutive years you have planted tomatoes, for example, in the same space.  Additionally, add information on the success or problems encountered with certain plants, watering issues, insect, weed and/or disease problems.  Your information will be invaluable to help recall and plan come next spring.

Were your tomatoes splitting on the top due to overhead watering?  Were other vegetables or flowers also affected by the constant pounding of water?  You may want to consider changing your irrigation to a soaker system or drip lines in order to avoid damage to plants and their fruit.  Better root development comes from watering for a longer time and then allowing the soil to dry to a depth of ½ to 1 inch before a second watering.  Taking control of your watering system will improve the quality of your gardens and perhaps save some water and money as well.

How about fertilizers?  Plants that produce large crops such as eggplant, tomatoes, peas, zucchini and beans often need additional fertilizer half way through the season.  Also, the soil may be depleted from these heavy bearing crops and need additional composting before winter to help restore the nutrients.  For a natural green fertilizer, you may want to consider planting an early crop of peas and then turning them under a couple of weeks before planting.  Peas put nitrogen into the soil and potatoes, peppers and potatoes all love nitrogen. Did you plant vegetables in pots?  It’s a good idea to change the potting soil and add garden fertilizer to restore the soil balance before replanting.

Were your plants pollinated or did they have only a few blooms that produced squash or cucumber for example?  Add bee attracting flowers to your raised beds and add flowers throughout your garden next year to increase the chances of pollination.  Did you plant lemon cucumbers?  If so, always plant at least two for good cross pollination and a bumper crop.

Have you cleaned out all the weeds and carefully removed any diseased plants and, in some cases, even the soil where diseased plants grew?  Look for larva and other signs of insects and lightly rake the soil allowing the winter cold to eliminate some of the pests.

As you make notes, look and evaluate, you will no doubt have many other ideas for next year’s garden . . . like planting fewer zucchini squash or giving plenty of room to the pumpkins.  What a good time of year to make these decisions before the snow falls and winter chases us inside.  Don’t forget to note what grew well and where so you can continue to repeat your successes as well as reduce the number of “Oh no’s” in the coming year.

C.O. Master Gardeners will be hosting a free class — Winter Garden Preparation: Putting Your Beds to Bed — on Saturday, September 22nd at 9:30 am at Hollinshead Community Garden.

For more information about today’s topic or another gardening topic, visit our website: [www.gocomga.com](http://www.gocomga.com) and click on the KPOV tab on the orange bar.

This has been Gardening:  Get Good at It on KPOV The Point.  Thanks for listening.

Resources:
From the OSU/Deschutes Extension Website:  [www.extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/](http://www.extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/)

1. Grow Smart, Grow Safe – Sixth Edition – Local Hazardous Waste Program – King County, Washington
2. EC 1503 – Fertilizing Your Garden
3. EC 1629 – Mulching
4. Sustainable Gardening – Handbook used in Master Gardening Training
5. Garden Tips for Central Oregon – Tips listed by the month for easy review